

principle of the world. In describing the categories of thought, Hegel thus meant to describe also the forms and stages of the world-process. The detailed account of this, which was significantly called the dialectical process, must necessarily follow the order of the abstract notions with which the human mind operates and in which it is, as it were, forced to move onward from one idea to another. The Logic or the evolution of the Logos exhibits therefore at the same time the deeper meaning of the formal categories of the ordinary logic, and brings into a scheme, intelligible to the human mind, the life and movement of the underlying spirit and essence of things. The different philosophies which preceded Hegel had already suggested the formula or rhythm which seems to govern the various stages of human thought. Thus Kant had already pointed out how affirmation and negation become united in limitation; how the notion of unity and its opposite, the notion of plurality, are united in the notion of the all. Fichte had employed the rhythm of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; Schelling had conceived the idea of an identity which splits up into opposites and comes together again in the position of indifference. Following these suggestions and partial applications of what he considered the general process of thinking and being, Hegel conceived that every content, be it the highest idea or only a lower stage of its manifestation, finds its first definition by its contrary or opposite, by something which it is not, and from which it is differentiated; that a second and fuller definition consists in finding what is common to the two opposites,